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ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)

MEGILLAT RUTH
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Shiur #37: Actions and Rewards: A Harmonious Story, Part II

Ruth Reaps the Benefits of Her Generosity

Ruth's determined magnanimity toward Naomi is the cornerstone of this book. It is offered unexpectedly, like a beacon of light in the dark and tragic opening chapter. Ruth offers the reader the earliest hope that the book will have a felicitous resolution, and that indeed proves to be the case.

Ruth's initial compassionate words and acts reverberate throughout the book. Boaz explicitly praises and describes Ruth's altruistic behavior on two separate occasions (2:11; 3:10). By purposefully weaving words throughout the narrative that recall Ruth's initial action, the narrative implicitly applauds Ruth's behavior. Most intriguing is the manner in which words are consciously employed to highlight the reward given to Ruth for her acts of kindness.^[1]

Perhaps the defining moment for Ruth is when she cleaves (*daveka*) to Naomi (1:14). The word "*davak*" is a rare word (especially in describing interactions between humans), but it appears again in the book when Boaz encourages Ruth to *cleave* to his reaper women (2:8),^[2] a proposal that welcomes Ruth into his field. Boaz's kind gesture textually mirrors Ruth's earlier act of kindness. In this way, the *Megilla* suggests that Ruth receives a commensurate return for her behavior.

Ruth's speech of devotion to Naomi also reverberates throughout the narrative, with positive repercussions. Ruth implores Naomi not to insult her (literally, harm her) by forcing her to abandon Naomi, stating "*altifga'i vi le-ozvekh*" (1:16). Ruth's generosity is returned in kind when Naomi seeks to protect Ruth from the harm of the young men in the field by using the same words, "*ve-lo yifge'u vakh be-sadeh acher*" (2:22). Boaz pays homage to Ruth's decision not to abandon Naomi ("*le-ozvekh*") when he uses that very word to acclaim her decision to abandon her past: "*va-ta'azvi avikh ve-imeikh...*" (2:11). Ruth's statement (and action) receives due recompense when Boaz tells his workers that they should draw out some sheaves and abandon them so that Ruth can glean in abundance ("*va-azavtem, ve-liketa*") (2:16). Finally, in response to Ruth's success in the fields, Naomi describes God (or possibly Boaz) as One Who did not abandon His kindnesses, "*asher lo azav chasdo*" (2:20), recalling Ruth's own adamant decision not to abandon her kindness with Naomi. The one who refuses to abandon another is herself not abandoned.

Ruth's ensuing speech of loyalty to Naomi contains several expressions that later redound to her benefit. Ruth first declares, "Where you go (*ba-asher teilkhi*) I will go (*eileikh*)" (1:16). Boaz refers to this act in his praise of Ruth, "And you went (*va-teilkhi*) to a nation which you did not know" (2:11). He also rewards Ruth with this word, gently imploring her not to go (*al teilkhi*) to a different field (2:8). Boaz employs this word several more times, informing Ruth that she should follow the reapers (*ve-halakht achareihen*), and, furthermore, if she gets thirsty, she should go (*ve-halakht*) and drink from the vessels that contain water drawn by the young men (2:9).^[3]

Ruth's next phrase expressing her devotion to Naomi is, "Where you lie (*ba-asher talini*), I will lie (*alin*)" (1:16). This declaration of allegiance is returned to her in Boaz's protective concern for her when she comes to the threshing floor: "Lie (*lini*) [here] tonight" (3:13). Ruth's embrace of Naomi's nation (*ameikh ami*) also finds expression in Boaz's approbation: "And you went to a nation (*el am*) which you did not know (*asher lo yadat*)" (2:11). Boaz later confirms that Ruth's goal has been accomplished and she has indeed found recognition and acceptance within the nation: "For all those in the gate of my nation (*ami*) know (*yode'a*) that you are an *eshetchayil*" (3:11).^[4] Ruth's desire to accept Naomi's God (*ve-E-lohayikh E-lohai*) also produces due recompense, as Boaz blesses her that she will obtain a complete reward from the Lord, God of Israel (*E-lohei Yisrael*), because she has come to take refuge under His wings (2:12).

Ruth's act of kindness with the dead (*im ha-meitim*) (1:8) is taken to a higher level when she uses this word three times in her speech of fidelity to Naomi: "Where you die, I will die (*ba-asher tamuti amut*) and there I will be buried. I swear that only death (*ha-mavet*) will separate between you and me" (1:17). Ruth's threefold mention of death in her speech seems intended to suggest her absolute devotion to her mother-in-law. By framing her devotion with respect to death,^[5] Ruth implies that her loyalty to Naomi will continue even after Naomi's death, a similar kindness to that which Ruth did with her husband. Boaz refers to Ruth's behavior after her husband's death in his encomium of Ruth: "It has surely been told to me that which you did after your husband's death (*mot isheikh*)..." (2:11). When Boaz is providing for Ruth's marriage, he refers to her as "the wife of the deceased (*eshet ha-met*)" (4:5). The primary purpose of this description is to direct our attention to the fact that the marriage is designed to perpetuate the name of the deceased husband. One wonders, however, if this appellation is also given to Ruth in deference to the exemplary behavior that she has exhibited toward the deceased. Ultimately, Boaz's proclamation that the marriage of Ruth is enacted for the express purpose of establishing the name of the deceased (4:5, 10) also recalls Ruth's words (*ba-asher tamuti amut*). This marriage is in no small measure a reward for Ruth's unwavering compassion, seen especially at the beginning of the narrative.

In the final analysis, Ruth's decision to accompany Naomi to Bethlehem does not produce the expected negative results. Instead of obeying Naomi and reaping the benefits of her generous blessing upon her return to Moav, Ruth compromises her future and insists on remaining with her mother-in-law. And yet, Ruth receives all of the

blessings in Bethlehem that Naomi had heaped upon her (and Orpah) in expectation of her departure.^[6]

- Naomi had blessed Ruth, “May God do with you *chessed*,” upon her return to Moav (1:8). Ultimately, Naomi blesses God for having maintained His *chessed* with those living (presumably Ruth is included in this category) and deceased in Bethlehem (2:20).
- Naomi sends Ruth back to “the house of her mother” (1:8) and “the house of a husband” in Moav (1:9). Ruth, however, enters the house of Boaz, her husband, in Bethlehem (4:11).
- Naomi sends Ruth back to Moav in order for her to find repose (*menucha*) in the house of her husband (1:9). However, after Ruth proves her devotion to Naomi, Naomi actively seeks repose (*mano’ach*) for Ruth in Bethlehem (3:1).
- Naomi’s blessing dispatching Ruth to Moav begins with the words, “God shall provide (*yiten Hashem*)” (1:9). The townspeople’s blessing of Boaz when Ruth enters his house begins with the words, “God shall provide (*yiten Hashem*)” (4:11).^[7]

Ruth’s later acts of kindness also receive due recompense. Her statement, “I will go to the field and glean (*alakata*) amongst the stalks after him in whose eyes I shall find favor” (2:2), yields positive results. Ruth herself recognizes that her wish has been fulfilled when, to her own great surprise, she does find a benefactor! Bewildered by her own success, she twice repeats her own phrase in puzzled amazement: “Why have I found favor in your eyes?!” (2:10) and, “I have found favor in your eyes!” (2:13). Ruth’s reward is clear when Boaz uses the word l.k.t.,^[8] which Ruth had previously employed, in instructing his reapers to allow Ruth to glean (*telakeit;ve-liketa*) with dignity (2:15-16).^[9] Moreover, her hard work gleaning “from the morning” (2:7) is returned when Boaz gently protects her “until the morning,” promising her that “in the morning” he will see to her redemption (3:13-14).

Naomi’s plan is presented as something which is for Ruth’s good (*asher yitav lakh*) (3:1). While one may debate Naomi’s actual intentions,^[10] the bid to do something good for Ruth is easily motivated by Ruth’s own actions. Boaz employs the adverb “*heitavi*” (“you have bettered”) to describe the manner in which Ruth increases her second kindness even more than her first (3:10). Moreover, Ruth is depicted by the townswomen as “better than seven sons” (*tova lakh mi-shiva banim*) for Naomi (4:15).

Ruth’s willingness to accede to Naomi’s instructions is paralleled in Boaz’s response to Ruth’s unlikely request. Ruth’s compliance with Naomi’s plan is stated in a decidedly obedient, if unenthusiastic, manner: “Everything that you tell me, I will do” (3:5). Following Boaz’s initial shock when he encounters Ruth, he gently reassures her using a nearly identical phrase: “Everything that you say, I will do for you” (3:11). Ruth complies with Naomi’s instructions to uncover Boaz’s feet and **lie** next to him (3:4, 7). Ruth’s dutiful compliance results in Boaz’s kindly and protective assertion that she should **lie** (safely) until the morning (3:13). Similarly, Ruth’s obedience to Naomi’s

charge that she not make herself known (*al tivad'i*) to Boaz until he finishes eating and drinking (3:3) is matched by Boaz's concerned bid to protect Ruth's reputation: "let it not be known (*al yivada*) that a woman came to the threshing floor" (3:14).

Certain textual difficulties can be resolved by seeking out these carefully placed parallels. After Boaz loads six barleys into Ruth's kerchief, which is designed to precipitate **her** return to the city, the verse informs us, "*va-yavo ha-ir*," "and **he** came to the city" (3:15). The following verse begins immediately with the words, "*va-tavo el chamota*" "And **she** came to her mother-in-law" (3:16). The text is somewhat choppy here, never having informed us that Ruth came back to the city at all.^[11] Perhaps this phrase is necessary to illustrate Boaz's enthusiasm to perform his duty without delay. Based on the prevalence of literary parallels which call attention to Ruth's reward, I suggest that this action of Boaz is designed to mirror Ruth's action in chapter two. After her long day in Boaz's field, Ruth hurries off to Naomi, concerned with supplying her with food. The text describes Ruth's return to Naomi with the identical terse phrase that it uses to describe Boaz in chapter three, "*va-tavo ha-ir*" "and **she** came to the city" (2:18). Perhaps the text, which consistently accentuates the reward which Ruth receives for her kindness toward Naomi, is drawing our attention to this point here as well. Just as Ruth arrived in the city, eager to help Naomi, Boaz comes straight away to the city in his enthusiasm to help Ruth.

If we assume that the text is drawing a deliberate parallel, we can resolve a second textual question. Twice the narrative depicts Ruth doing something with (or for) Boaz when she was in the field (*asher asita immo, asher asiti immo*) (2:19). It is unclear, however, what exactly Ruth did for Boaz. This depiction seems confused and reversed; was it not Boaz who did something for Ruth that day in his field?^[12] If we consider the broader use of the word, "*asa*," "to do," in the *Megilla*, this question may be somewhat allayed.^[13] Naomi describes Ruth's initial act of kindness using the verb "*asa*," "to do": "God shall do (*ya'as*) kindness with you, as you have done (*asitem*) with the deceased and with me" (1:8). Boaz's admiring account of Ruth's undertaking likewise employs this verb, depicting all that Ruth did (*asher asit*) with her mother-in-law (2:11). In fact, the first ten appearances of this verb concern Ruth, many of which describe her kindnesses. The final two appearances of this verb describe Boaz doing something for Ruth. When Ruth returns from her night on the threshing floor, the text relates that which Boaz did with (or for) her (*asher asa la ha-ish*) (3:16). The point is well made: Boaz acts for Ruth because of all that Ruth did for others during the course of the narrative.

The abundant parallels and word mirroring which I have delineated have a simple objective. No action is left unrewarded in this harmonious book. Ruth receives just and ample reward for her exemplary behavior. Because Ruth was kind to Naomi, she receives kindness from Boaz. And yet, the real message of this idea goes beyond this commonplace. The *Megilla* anticipates and foreshadows an era of monarchy, which is conceived to be an era of justice. Accordingly, this is a book in which no action is left without recompense, a book in which all good deeds receive their just desserts.

Tragedy and Resolution

We have seen that *Megillat Ruth* is a book which leaves no loose ends. In this short narrative, all aspects of its tragic beginning have a felicitous resolution. The *Megilla* deftly conveys this in its conscious linguistic interweaving of the description of the opening predicament with the harmonious end.

The following self-explanatory chart illustrates the manner in which linguistic mirroring is employed to describe the problem and its complete resolution:^[14] (See below).

***Megillat Ruth*: In Summation**

We have spent the past two *shiurim* illustrating the harmonious nature of the book and the manner in which this harmony finds expression in the linguistic construction of the *Megilla*. I will conclude this idea with one final point. As noted many times, *Megillat Ruth* aspires toward kingship, which is its ultimate goal. This harmonious story anticipates and paves the way for the new harmonious era of monarchy. In its ideal state, the Davidic monarchy is designated to create a just society in which all people receive their due recompense, and conflicts and tensions dissipate or are resolved by the king. This short, idyllic book, with its difficult beginning and triumphant conclusion, provides a prelude and a foretaste for a hopeful and promising future, which is set in motion by the harmonious conditions of *Megillat Ruth*.

This series of shiurim has been dedicated to the memory of my mother Naomi Ruth z”l bat Aharon Simcha, a woman defined by Naomi’s unwavering commitment to family and continuity, and Ruth’s selflessness and kindness.

I welcome all comments and questions: yaelziegler@gmail.com

<u>The Tragedy:</u>	<u>The Resolution:</u>
<u>Death of Children:</u> And the woman was left without her two children (yeladeha) or her husband. (1:5)	<u>Birth of a Child:</u> And Naomi took the child (ha-yeled). (4:17)
<u>Naomi Has No Sons:</u> “Do I still have sons in my innards who can be husbands for you?” (1:11)	<u>Naomi Has a Daughter-in-Law who is Better than Sons:</u> “For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better for you than seven sons!” (4:16)
<u>Lack of Hope in Bearing a Child:</u>	<u>A Child is Born</u>

<p>“Even if I said, ‘I have hope. Tonight I shall be with a man and I will birth sons (<i>ve-gam yaladiti vanim!</i>)’” (1:12)</p>	<p>“A son has been born to Naomi (<i>yulad ben le-Naomi!</i>)” (4:17)</p>
<p><u>Naomi Relinquishes Her Name in a Speech to the Women:</u> “Do not call (<i>tikrena</i>) me Naomi, call (<i>karena</i>) me Mara... Why should you call (<i>tikrena</i>) me Naomi?” (1:20-21)</p>	<p><u>Names are Restored to Naomi’s Family in a Speech by the Women:</u> “And his name shall be called (<i>ve-yikarei</i>) in Israel... And the neighbor women called (<i>va-tikrena</i>) for him a name ... And they called (<i>va-tikrena</i>) his name Oved.” (4:14, 17).</p>
<p><u>Naomi is Empty:</u> “I left full and God returned me empty (<i>reikam</i>).” (1:21)</p>	<p><u>Ruth Solves Naomi’s Emptiness:</u> “For he said to me, ‘Do not come empty [handed] (<i>reikam</i>) to your mother-in-law.’” (3:17)</p>
<p><u>Naomi’s Situation is Bad (<i>ra</i>):</u> “God did evil (<i>heira</i>) to me.” (1:21)</p>	<p><u>Naomi’s Situation is Good (<i>tov</i>):</u> “For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better for you (<i>tovalakh</i>) than seven sons!” (4:16)</p>
<p><u>God’s Harshness toward Naomi:</u> “For the hand of God has gone out against me... For God has embittered me... God has done evil to me.” (1:13, 20-21)</p>	<p><u>God’s Goodness toward Naomi:</u> “Blessed is God Who has not withheld a redeemer from you today.” (4:14)</p>
<p><u>God’s Testimony Against Naomi:</u> “God has testified against me.” (1:21)</p>	<p><u>The Nation Witnesses Boaz’s Acts of Redemption:</u> “You are witnesses today...” (4:9-10)</p>
<p><u>Ruth is Sent Away to a New Husband’s House in Moav:</u> “God shall give you (<i>yitein Hashem</i>) and you shall find a resting place, each woman (<i>isha</i>) in the house of her husband (<i>beit ishah</i>).” (1:9)</p>	<p><u>Ruth is Welcomed into the House of Her Husband in Bethlehem:</u> “God shall give (<i>yitein Hashem</i>) the woman (<i>ha-isha</i>) who comes into your house (<i>el beitekha</i>) [that she should be] as Rachel and Leah.” (4:11)</p>
<p><u>Ruth is Pushed Away:</u> “God shall give you (<i>yitein Hashem lakhem</i>) and you should find repose each women in the house of her husband.” (1:9)</p>	<p><u>Ruth is Welcomed:</u> “And your house shall be like the house of Peretz... with the seed which God shall give you (<i>asher yitein lekha Hashem</i>) from this young woman.” (4:12)</p>
<p><u>Ruth is Alienated:</u> “To whom is this young woman (<i>ha-</i></p>	<p><u>Ruth Belongs:</u> “And your house shall be like the</p>

<p><i>na'ara ha-zot</i>)?" (2:5)</p>	<p>house of Peretz... with the seed which God shall give you from this young woman (<i>ha-na'ara ha-zot</i>)." (4:12)</p>
<p><u>God Returns Her [from Moav] Embittered:</u> "God returned (<i>heshivani</i>)^[15] me empty." (1:21)</p>	<p><u>Naomi's Spirit has been Restored:</u> And he will be for you as one who restores your spirit (<i>meishiv nefesh</i>). (4:15)</p>

Appendices:

Appendix #1: Ruth's Actions and Rewards: A Hebrew Chart

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á) āĒòĀĒø āÇúĪĒēāāĒēā āÇúĪĀũĪÒĒēā (éç	(ā ēā) āĒòĀĒø āÇēĪĒēāĒēā āÇēĪĒēũÑĒēú ðēĪĒēēāĒē
éÇòÇúÒ ā' òĀĪĪĒēēĒēī çĒñĒēā òĀĪ ēĪÇāĀũÑĒøðĀũÒĀēúĒēī (āÇĪĪĀúĀēī āĀòĀĪĪĒēāĒē (ā ç āĒāĪĀā āĒāĪÇā ĪĀé ēĪĒēī ðĒũÒĀēúāĒēú çĀĪāĒēúĀēĀ (ā āĀũÑĒø (ēā āĀéòĒēā ĪĀ÷ĪÇēĀũĪĀ āÇēĪĒēī ēĀāĀé āĀāĒēðĒēðĒũÒĀēú ĪÇēĪĀēøĀēĀ āĪēøāĪēĀ āÇúĪÇĀĪĀā ĪÇçĀĪāĒēúĒēāĪ āĀú òĀĪĪĒē āĀũÑĒøðĒũÒĀēúĒēā āÇúĪĒēāĪĒø ũÑĀĪ āĒēĀĒēũÑ òĀĪĪĒē āÇēĪĒēī ðĒũÒĀēúĀē āĀũÑĒø (āĪĒēòÇæ(ā ēē	ðĒũÒĒēāĪēāĪ āÇúĪÇĀĪĒēā ĪĒāĪ āĀú ēĪĒēī āĀũÑĒø (āĒēĀĒēũÑ (ā ēæ

Appendix #2: Ruth Receives Naomi's Blessing: A Hebrew Chart

Naomi blesses Ruth's departure to Moav:	Ruth receives the blessing inBethlehem:
ĪĀēĀðĒēā ũÑĒēāĀðĒēā āĀũĪÑĒēā ĪĀāĀēú	āĀũÑĒø ĪĒā ĩÇā āĪēøāĪēĀ āāĪā

<éòüā> (à ç) òÄìlÈëÆíçÆñÆā 'ä éÇòÇùÒ	àÄìlÈÄì ùÑÉáÄðÈä	(á ë) òÈæÇáçÇñÄäìÄÉ
íÄëÄðÈä éÇòÇùÒ <éòüā> íÄáÄéúàÄìlÈÄì àÄùlÑÈä ä' òÄìlÈëÆí çÆñÆā èìÇáÄùÑÆø òÄùÒÄéúÆí òÄí äÇìlÄúÄéí àÄòÄìlÈäÄé. (è) éÄúìÄì ä' ìÈëÆí äìlÄòÆäìÈ ìÄðäìçÈä (áìÄéúàÄéúÑÈÄì (à ç-è àÄùlÑÈä	éÄúìÄì ä' àÆú äÈàÄùlÑÈä äÇáìÈàÈä èìlÄøÈçÄì äìÈÄìÄäÈä àÆíäìÄéúÆÈÈ àÄùÑÆø äìÈðäì ùÑÄúìÄéäÆí áìÄéúéÄùÒÄøÈäÄì äÇòÄùÒÄä àÆú çÇéÄì äìlÄàÆðÄøÈùÈä äìlÄòÆä áìÄáÄéúìÈçÆí. (éá) ùÑÄì èìlÄáÄéúòìÆøÆð (ä áÄéúÄèÈ äÄéäÄé (èà-éá	
éÄúìÄì ä' ìÈëÆí ìÄðäìçÈäàÄùlÑÈä äìÄéú äìlÄòÆäìÈ (àÄéúÑÈÄì (à è	áìÄúìÄé äÄìÈä àÄáç÷ìÈùÑ (ìÈðäÈçÇáÄùÑÆø éÄéèÇá ìÈÈÄ (á à ìÈÈÄ	
äìlÄòÆäìÈ ìÄðäìçÈä éÄúìÄì ä' ìÈëÆí (àÄùlÑÈä äìÄéú àÄéúÑÈÄì (à è	àÆú äÈàÄùlÑÈä äÇáìÈàÈä àÆí 'ä éÄúìÄì (áìÄéúÆÈÈ (ä èà	

Appendix #3: Tragedy and Resolution: A Hebrew Chart

<u>The Tragedy:</u>	<u>The Resolution:</u>
(à ä) éìäéä áúùàø äàüä ìùðé	(ã èæ) äéìä áú÷ç ðòìé áú
(à éá) éìäúé äðéí äì äééúé äìéìä ìàéù ääì	(ìðòìé (ã èæ äì éìä
(ìé ìøà (à è øàðä÷ ,ìé ðòìé ú÷øàðä àì	áú÷øàðäùìä ...ìä äùèðáú ùí ìäìø áú÷øàðä (òäää (ã èæ
(äùéáðé ä' (à èà äøé÷ì äðé ìää äìéúé	(àì çìäúéé (á èæ øé÷ì àì úáääé
(èé éòää áé éä ä' (à éä	(áøäé ä' àùø ìä äùáéú ìé äàì áéáì (ã éä
(éúì ä' ìéì äìòàì ìðäçà àüä áéú àüä (à è	(éúì ä' áú äàüä ääää àì áéúé (ã èà
(á ä) äæàú äððøä ìé	äæàú äððøä ìì 'ìì äæøð àùø éúì ìé ä

[1] I have appended a Hebrew chart of the parallels that I will be presenting with regard to Ruth's actions and rewards at the end of this *shiur* (Appendix #1).

[2] See also *Ruth* 2:21, 23, where this word appears twice more in a similar context.

[3] The usage of this word may also be a reward for the initiative taken by Ruth to help Naomi, "*eilcha na ha-sadeh*," "I will go out to the fields (2:2).

[4] The nation (*am*) surfaces several times in chapter 4 (verses 4, 9, 11). In these verses, the nation blesses Ruth and approves of her entrance into the nation.

[5] It seems likely that this formulation reflects Ruth's awareness of Naomi's hopelessness and Naomi's expectation that her return to Bethlehem will likely result in her death.

[6] I have appended a separate Hebrew chart of these parallels in Appendix #2.

[7] See also 4:12.

^[8] This parallel is not convincing on its own merit. After all, the word l.k.t. is the key word of the chapter, appearing ten times. Nevertheless, I have introduced this parallel as supporting evidence for a broader picture.

^[9] The overseer also uses this word when he cites Ruth (2:7). It is not clear if we are meant to take the overseer's words at face value, inasmuch as in my view his agenda is to belittle and perhaps malign the Moavite foreigner. For our purposes, however, it is interesting that the overseer describes Ruth as going to the house (ostensibly to rest) infrequently (2:7). If this is a reliable report, Ruth seems to receive a reward for this diligence as well when she receives a house (mentioned five times) at the end of the *Megilla* (4:11-12).

^[10] See *shiur* #21.

^[11] To resolve this textual choppiness, some Hebrew manuscripts actually have the feminine form of the verb, as does the Syriac translation and the Lucianic recension of the Septuagint. This divergent reading suggests that the present reading is not entirely smooth, although most scholars accept the present text as containing a better reading for various reasons (e.g. Edward F. Campbell Jr., *Ruth* [Anchor Bible, 1975], p. 128).

^[12] I offered several approaches to this question in *shiur* #19.

^[13] Generally, I would consider the word *asa* to be too commonplace to develop its textual significance. In this case, given the textual ambiguity noted above, in which the word *asa* modifies Ruth without evident justification, I have deemed it appropriate to consider the use of the word in the *Megilla*. I maintain that the frequent appearance and careful textual placement of this word justifies my observation of its significance.

^[14] I have appended this chart in Hebrew at the end of the *shiur* (Appendix #3) for those who find it easier to discern the literary parallels in Hebrew.

^[15] The word "*shuv*," to return, is used only these two times in the *Megilla* in a causative form (*hifil*). This connects Naomi's complaint of having been returned empty by God (1:21) to her revived spirit at the end of the book.